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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [SOCI](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [SG](#)  
SUBJECT: SENEGAL: TROUBLES AHEAD IN 2009? CORRECTED VERSION

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY A/DCM Kevin J. Mullally REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: Laye Bamba Diallo, Editor of the Nouvelle Horizon weekly and Omar Ndiaye, an old Embassy contact and the editor of the Temoin weekly, told poloff that they are both worried about the future for Senegal, characterizing the outlook as bleak. They believe that President Abdoulaye Wade has learned nothing from his March 22 local election defeat and that the plan to have his son Karim succeed him is still very much alive. End Summary

¶2. (C) With many people predicting a government reshuffle right after Senegal's April 4 Independence Day, questions now abound as to why President Wade has not acted as predicted. According to Ndiaye, the President is hesitant because he is of two minds, &I don't think that he has abandoned the whole Karim succession project. But now the question is, in what capacity? Does Karim join the Cabinet as a Minister, and if so which Ministry? Also I had heard from a contact that Wade is trying to attract leading opposition figures to join his Cabinet. So at the moment it's all in flux.<sup>8</sup> Diallo agreed adding, &Whatever the President decides will give us an idea of where he is going. I don't believe that he has learned anything from the election. Also to put things in perspective, his coalition did not fare as badly as the papers reported. Sure they lost some big cities and that is a blow for him, but that being said they won the whole of the south, many regional councils and the popular vote.<sup>8</sup>

#### Monarchic Tendencies -----

¶3. (C) Both editors were pessimistic that after all this time and effort that President Wade would be willing to make the changes necessary to meet the needs of a frustrated populace, &Wade and his family are like monarchs flying around in their private jets, surrounded by courtiers<sup>8</sup> said Ndiaye. He went on, &this kind of insouciance about people's everyday sufferings will turn violent if the President does not do something to solve the country's economic woes. Wade may not even finish this year in office.<sup>8</sup> Diallo noted that his magazine would be publishing an investigative piece chronicling how the government spent CFA 37 billion (USD 75.2 million) in 2008 just to pay the phone bills of all those government employees, their families and cronies who have government owned cell phones and who spend all their time making international calls. Diallo then went on to describe Wade as a dictator of another era, "all his contemporaries finished their rules in the 80's when in most African countries the one-party system ended. He came into power very late and his style of governing is from another era. I expect that if the Karim plan doesn't work, he is deluded enough to run in 2012."

¶4. (C) In a separate meeting with Khaliffa Sall, who became

the new Mayor of Dakar on April 18, he told us that he expects that Wade will be combative and make life extremely difficult for him, "Wade is a fighter; he knows nothing of co-habitation. We served together when we were both Ministers in (former President) Diouf's cabinet and I expect nothing less from him. His choices are limited now in terms of what he can do next. (Former Prime Minister) Idrissa Seck is really his ace in the hole."

Comment

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15. (C) The fact that the President has yet to enact a reshuffle seems to indicate that the editors are correct in their contention that the President has, for once, not quite worked out what he is going to do next. Prior to the elections he had threatened that anybody who lost in their local districts would have to face the music. However, in a recent reconciliation meeting with Idrissa Seck's coalition, the President's Democratic Party of Senegal (PDS) was represented by the very architects of his SOPI coalition's defeat, indicating that he is not quite ready to ditch the old guard in favor of restructuring his party. Furthermore, this reluctance to act strengthens the argument that he is still in the "Karim succession" mindset. This argument may be buttressed with the facts that, first, the PDS is blaming their losses not on popular discontent but on internal divisions, and second, the Minister of Interior held a widely publicized press conference where he outlined in detail why the SOPI coalition had actually won the elections comfortably. End Comment  
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